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Thesis

THE TENDENCY OF THE NEW-HIGH-GERMAN LYRIC

submitted by

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Yet gleams of the sunrise are appearing. Verses by Scholz, by Frank and by Flaischlen are quoted to reveal the new movement. It is to be hoped that again there will be a confirmation of the famous word of Novalis:-

"Wohin gehen wir? Immer nach Hause."

I. Introduction

It may be said with truth that the Germans excel in two lines of art, music and lyric. The two are in reality but one, for the lyric poem is a genuine song.

This "typische deutsche Kunst" grew gradually out of the feelings of the people, out of the folk-consciousness and the folk-ways. The lyric is a development from the folk-song of ancient days and is one of the "Germanest" of German arts. It represents a fundamental German trait.

II. The Problem

The phrase "modern high German" presents to us a very long period of time. It begins with the literary work of Martin Luther at the beginning of the sixteenth century and stretches out over more than four hundred years to the present year of grace.

A. It is necessary to glance quickly over those long years and point out the numerous significant political and social events which effected the poets of the times; as well as to explain somewhat the various literary movements. The German lyric is a product of the spirit of the times, and can be understood, for the purposes of such a thesis as this, only against the background of human movements and great happenings which stirred the feelings and awoke the voice of song.

1.a As far as lyric poetry is concerned, the first two centuries of this period have little of significance. The sixteenth century was fully occupied with the Reformation and the religious struggles that ensued. Such struggles between Catholics and Protestants continued not only through this century

but also into the seventeenth century, where they led finally to the Thirty Years' War. And this war destroyed the whole literary life of Germany. Nearly all the countries of Europe took part in the war. Danes, Swedes, French, Spaniards and Italians laid waste and plundered Germany.

* "Die wohlhabenden Städte verarmten. Handel und Verkehr lagen darnieder,----Wohlstand und Bildung waren gänzlich verschwunden. ---Das ganze Reich war in einem solch traurigen Zustande, dass es mehr als ein Jahrhundert dauerte, bis es sich von den Wunden des Krieges erholt hatte. Auch nach dem Frieden war das Land noch beständig von Feinden bedroht-----. Ein Drittel der Bevölkerung war im Kriege verschwunden."

Under the influence of the world-wide imitation of France the German language and German customs disappeared both in court circles and in the higher classes of society. The court and the nobility spoke French, the educated classes spoke Latin. Thus the cultured people lost all interest in German literature. Only the humble folk still sang the old folk-songs and interested themselves in old German life and tales of their heroes. In such conditions no new development in the lyric could be expected. So in those long years

*Stroebe, p.89

almost nothing is found except the folk-songs and the church-hymns that developed from them.

*"Das deutsche Volkslied vom Ausgang des Mittelalters ist, wenn wir seine eigentümliche Stellung in der Entwicklung der deutschen Kultur bestimmen wollen, vor allem als ein Massenzeugnis für eine ganz ausserordentliche Aufnahmefähigkeit zu betrachten. ------ Kaum eine Seite des menschlichen Charakters, kaum eine Phase menschlichen Lebens, kaum ein Ereignis der nationalen Geschichte, die nicht hier ihren Ausdruck fänden. Es ist als wenn die Menschen--die tausendfachen Eindrücke der inneren und ausseren Welt klarer und voller auffassten als je vorher; und als wenn diese Eindrücke nur im Volksliede sich zum persönlichen Erlebnis, zum kunstlerischen Bilde, zu allgemeingültigen Form verdichteten ----- Jedes echte Volkslied ist aus dem Moment herausgeboren; es ist ein Stück Natur; ein Reflexlaut, den das mächtige Weltgetriebe in einer Einzelseele anklingen lässt und der nur in Echo gleichgestimmter Seelen weitertönt und zu Akkorden anschwillt."

These songs, however, did not stand in special favor with the learned followers of Luther, who sought to replace them by the Church-song. For this purpose they employed the rhythmical form, the simplicity and

*Kuno Francke P. 208f.

even the melody of the folksongs. In some measure we are indebted to this circumstance for the charm in which the Kirchenlieder excel.

1b. In the eighteenth century all the spiritual life of Europe was under the sway of Rationalism. This is fundamentally an excessive emphasis upon the reasonable and the prosaic. And since it drove out the feelings, it was unable to produce genuine lyrics. Yet the rationalists did search restlessly for truth, and by their critical temper they made large contribution to clearer views regarding poetry.

Johann Gottsched applied reason to his study of poetry. Johann Bodmer and Johann Breitinger on the contrary granted to the poet the right to allow full play to his fancy. And the discussions between the two schools, along with their power and their earnestness, assisted materially in the developing of German poetry. Yet there were but few lyric poets in that first half of the century; and even these few were practically forgotten, because they did not allow their feelings to take expression in lyric poetry.

The passing of Rationalism, and with it a period of fruitage in the lyric, did not come to its end until in the eighth decade. This transition period in German

literature is called the "Sturm - und Drangzeit." The literary movement in this period was an "unklar gährender Literarrevolution" aroused by Rousseau, in which youth strove for a return to nature. The young "Stormers" treasured the innate creative faculty and the devotion to inmost feelings more than all rules of art.

The movement inclined mainly toward the drama. But several poets, who were closely related to the "Stormers", gave their attention to the lyric and found very independent notes which were simple and in the spirit of the folk-song. These young men formed themselves into a "Hainbund," the so-called "Göttinger Hainbund." The members were Johann Voss, Ludwig Hölty, Matthias Claudius, and Gottfried Bürger. Hölty, who died at a very early age, was the most talented lyricist among these young poets.

The youthful Goethe and the youthful Schiller both took an enthusiastic part in the movement, but did not long remain within its borders. For both of those poets this was merely a transition period through which they passed into a broader and richer life as giants among poets. Nothing significant for lyric poetry is found outside of these few names until the appearance of a new literary revolution in the nineteenth century.

l.c. The new movement appeared at the turn of the century. Goethe and Schiller were then at the height of their creative power. Just as they had turned away from the life of their own age to the classical world, so the new poets took refuge in a world of fancy. These were young men in the university city of Jena who found themselves in agreement upon certain strong ideas and tendencies. They called their group "the Romantic School." The members of this group were the brothers Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich von Hardenberg who was known as "Novalis."

In contrast to these "Frühromantiker" were the "Jüngere Romantiker," Clemens Brentano, Achim von Arnim, Adalbert von Chamisso, Joseph von Eichendorff, Friedrich Rückert, Wilhelm Müller, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff and Nikolaus Lenau.

These poets have done a great deal for the lyric, which owes to them first of all a deepening of the life of feeling. Also in their works is found a deep feeling for nature. Still again they have opened once more a path into Germany's middle ages, where "der Hauch der Poesie auf dem Leben ruhte, und wo sich die Phantasie und das Gemütsleben reich entwickelte." They collected, as Herder had done in earlier days, folksongs and folk-

tales, and created that romantic ideal of the middle-ages which ruled literature for such a long time. They wakened interest in the genuine German spirit and possessions and founded the science of German philology. By means of excellent translations they increased the knowledge of worth-while literature from other lands. And along with all this they took great interest in the realm of mythology with its mysterious magic and its "Mondlicht-Stimmung," as is shown in the beautiful verse of Tieck:

"Mondbeglänzte Zaubernacht,
Die den Sinn befangen hält,
Wunderbare Märchenwelt,
Steig' auf in der alten Pracht."

Professor Von der Leyen has described this Romanticism well in his "Deutsche Dichtung in neuer Zeit."

*"Die deutsche Romantik war der letzte umfassende grosse Sieg des deutschen Geistes über die Welt. Der Triumph Richard Wagners ist nichts als sein tönender und allzulauter, prachtüberladener Ausklang. Das nationale Bewusstsein, die Erneuerung und

*"Deutsche Dichtung in neuer Zeit" Von der Leyen P.194

Verjüngung der katholischen Kirche, die ungeheure Ausbreitung und Vervollkommnung der einzelnen Wissenschaften. Alles das sind Schöpfungen der Romantik. Die romantische Dichtung hat auch die Kunst in sich zurückgeführt, zugleich das Reich ihrer Phantasie ins Unendliche geweitet. Sie flutete tief nach Frankreich hinein und nach England hinüber und strömte nach Dänemark und Norwegen und befruchtete die russische Dichtung. Das Deutschland, das die Voreltern unsrer Feinde liebten, war im Grunde das romantisch verklärte Deutschland unsres Bürgertums --- Es war das Deutschland des Liedes und des Märchens, das in Heidelberg studierte und das den Rhein besang."

Romanticism, by this cherishing of the native spirit and treasures of the past, had done a great deal towards raising the national spirit for a German unity; but the hopes in the hearts of the people were nearly overthrown by the power of Napoleon. Then the king of Prussia issued a call to the people and the Wars of Freedom began. The spirit of these wars is echoed magnificently in the patriotic lyrics of Ernst Arndt, Theodor Körner and Max von Schenkendorf.

In the first half of the nineteenth century are found also the so-called Swabian Poets, Ludwig Uhland, Gustav Schwab, Justinus Kerner and Eduard Mörike. These poets too were enthusiastic over the middle ages, but they thought of it as a bygone period. It was no living present world for them.* "Sie teilten die besten Bestrebungen der Romantiker aber hielten sich von den Einseitigkeiten und Übertreibungen der Romantik fern." l.d. Germany passed into the age of machine and factory in the fourth decade of the century. With this there awoke a critical spirit in her soul, which gave a new turn to knowledge. A poetic movement grew out of this, which has been called "Realism." The poets no

Oppermann P. 64

longer sought beauty in the classic idea, nor yet in the realm of fancy. They thought that they had to lay hold of actual life and thus they presented a realistic picture in their poetry.

There are but few lyric poets among the Realists; they were mainly novelists and dramatists. Those, over whom Heine gained great influence, were called "Young Germany." A few of them, as Ferdinand Freiligrath and Hoffman von Fallersleben, wrote political songs.

1. e. In the middle of the century appeared yet another group of young poets, the members of which gathered in the city of Munich. This is called the "Munich Circle of Poets." Again the poets turned back to classical ideals and sought the service of beauty. Emmanuel Geibel was the leader of the group. Their works were in general only doggerel; but a few poets in these years produced beautiful poetry, for example, Theodor Storm and Martin Greif.

2. a. Since the Franco-Prussian War there has been a complete change in the realm of German lyric poetry. For a short time Germany remained almost wholly without fruit in the poetic art. Life was filled with economic and political activity. The people took pleasure enough in the sing-song of lesser poets. Then in the eighties

a literary change became noticeable.

2. b. At that time people began asking searching questions about the actual life of the laborers and the poor. Socialism made great progress in the hearts of the masses. Some poets thought then that literature ought to represent the stuff deep in life's experiences. They opposed with all their power the weak insipid literature of the time. Truth, freedom, reality were the key-words. These poets wished to give once more to their race the courage for truth. For this purpose they showed life wherever it was ugly or wretched or common; they showed the great masses of working folk and the ill-treated folk. The age was one of activity, of experimentation, of system. Thus the new art seeks to break the world into countless atoms and to represent each atom in as true and living a form as possible.

(1) Paradoxical as it may seem, these poets sought this "natural" material not in the country but in the large city, among the oppressed and weak rather then among the strong and the young, and in the future not in the long-gone past. Out of all this turbulence and struggle there arose a theory of Naturalism which such men as Arno Holz and Johannes Schaf wrought into lyric and dramatic art.

(2) It is rather difficult to describe the next developments of the modern literary movement. There is the Impressionism of Detlev von Liliencron, (3) Symbolism, whose most significant lyric representatives are Richard Dehmel, Stephan George and Hugo von Hofmannsthal; and (4) Expressionism, whose greatest exponents are Else Lasker-Schüler and Franz Werfel. Upon all these poets and their contemporaries among the moderns the philologian and philosopher Nietzsche made a strong impression. He was a great word painter and he gripped the souls of the German youth with his unrestrained individualism. His favorite phrase, "werde, der du bist" sounded heroic in their ears. While his verses*"schienen zu den Zeilen zu streben, die auch die naturalistische Lyrik erreichen wollte, sie hauchten dieser eine neue leidenschaftliche Wahrheit ein und eine tiefe, leidende Seele. In Freiheit und in natürlichen, wechselnden Rythmus strömten sie dahin, wiederum wie es die Prediger der neuen Lyrik wollten." Thus all the poets from Liliencron on are very much indebted to him.

(2) Impressionism which developed from Naturalism expresses nothing new. It is but the last phase of the wearied art of the century. The poet realized that he could not represent artistically the very objects them-

* Von der Leyen P. 181

selves, but only the impressions which he had received. Therefore he sought to limit his art to the reproduction of subjectively colored impressions.

.(3) After this Symbolism blossomed in the soil of individualism. This sounded once more the rights of the spirit and the importance of the free creative imagination. Things and events were presented in symbolical forms.

I would like to explain this movement somewhat by quotations from George's "Blätter für die Kunst" as found in Von der Leyen, pages 196; 199:-

* "Als im letzten Viertel des vorigan Jahrhunderts die deutsche Poesie in süssliches Nachfarentum und theaterhafte Rednerei verfiel, folgte in den achtziger Jahren jene äusserliche Gegenbewegung der sogenannten Wirklichkeitskunst. Sie kam aus keiner gestältenden Not, sie war verneinend oder auflösend und änderte nur die Stoffe. -- Ihrer sprachlichen Leistung und ihrer geistigen Haltung nach unterschied sie sich in Nichts von schlechten Sturm-und Drangliedern, den vorelterlichen Leihromanen und der bekannten bürgerlichen Komödie."

**"Wir wollen keine Erfindung von Geschichten, sondern die Wiedergabe von Stimmungen, keine Betrachtung, sondern Darstellung, keine Unterhaltung, sondern Ein-

*Von der Leyen P. 196 **Von der Leyen P. 199

druck. Das Gedicht ist der höchste, der entgültige Ausdruck des Geschehens, nicht Wiedergabe eines Gedankens, sondern eine Stimmung. Was in der Malerei wirkt, ist Verteilung, Linie und Farbe, in der Dichtung Auswahl, Mass und Klang."

They hold to the feeling of sacredness in art. "Leben ist Alltag, Kunst is Feiertag; Leben ist Diesseits, Kunst soll sich nicht leicht der Menge erschliessen. Wer in ihr Heiligtum tritt, soll das Irdische von sich abstreifen."

b. (4) Finally in the decade of the world war there developed a new "Expressionism." The senses had been feeding richly on wealth and knowledge, but the soul had starved. The curse of 'things' was everywhere. The fundamental word of the times was 'movement,' and movement in an ever increasing speed. In the midst of such rush and breathless excitement the ego had found no opportunity for self-expression. Moreover knowledge was pushing her boundaries further and further back. The atomic elements had been indivisable. We had been able to build confidently in a cosmos. But suddenly everything that had been firm and steadfast was swept away in the storm of modern science. The great world-war really deepened the feeling of uncertainty.

At this time some young poets raised their voice in

behalf of the overpowered ego and the enchained lyric. They wanted an art which might speak without mediation from soul to soul. One is reminded of the outburst of the Psalmist: *"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." They demanded that poetry should represent not nature, not things, but merely the effect of the All upon the Ego. Just as Naturalism sought to create a genuine precious lyric by means of rythm, and Symbolism by means of the enticing ring of words, so Expressionism would recreate the most sacred lyric by means of entrancing visions.

** Von der Leyen writes: "Natürlich ist Expresionismus so gut ein unklares und vieldeutiges Gebilde wie Impressionismus und Naturalismus. Darauf beruht auch ein Teil seiner Wirkung und seiner Magie. Auch ist der Expressionismus, wie so manche andre Richtung, der Grippe vergleichbar, ein Sammelsame für viele geistige Infektionskrankheiten."

B. It is easy to see from this rapid sketch of the course of lyric poetry down to the present, that the field is very broad and very rich. I have sketched the most significant movements briefly and have named the most important poets. The problem is now before us to

*Psalm 42:7
**Von der Leyen P. 251

find something definite in all these changes and among so many varied purposes and ideas, something which will reveal the tendency of lyric poetry in its whole course.

Is it possible to discover any single tendency which will reveal the poetic mind of Germany? Has the lyric followed an even, regular course in form and content and spirit? At once we must answer 'no.' It is absolutely impossible to discover such a tendency. The lyric is just as broad and varied and immeasurable as life itself.

1. Then what assertion may we make concerning the direction and tendency of the lyric, as we look back over the long years? When we consider maturely the development from olden days to the present, we may safely assert that there has been a tendency toward formlessness in expression and towards chaos in ideas. At present lyric poetry cherishes a preference and a capacity for sketch and fragment, for the childish and the primitive, for the confused cry and mystic visions. But it would be evidently unjust, to leave the criticism in such a rough and incomplete state. There are in these very present days many clear evidences in the lyric, which point to higher values in the lyric spirit. Therefore, I should prefer to write the criticism in different form.

2. Two distinct tones may be heard constantly through the changing years and the manifold streams of the lyric. And these form a distinct contrast. One tone rings until 1870. The other sounds from then on. My purpose is to reveal and to demonstrate these tones. It will be self-evident that not all the lyrics can be quoted for this purpose; a selection must be made. By such a selection I hope to establish the foregoing assertion.

What then are these two tones? The well-known hymn of Martin Luther, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott," is a fitting text for the whole period from 1500 to 1870. The poet took God and life for granted. He asked very few questions about it. One of the modern German poets has said, "The kneeling man with folded hands was the gesture of another age." Thus the lyric, in which the poet sings his inmost feelings, was a song of rapture and of faith. Life contains much that is certain and clear and steadfast. But when the poet found no such certainty in human life, then he created an inner world, as in the case of the romantic writers. So that always in the earlier lyric there was a clear ringing tone of confidence.

On the other hand, the years since 1870 have brought into view a painful, gloomy longing. The question mark is the sign-post. And the key-note of modern times is

to be found in the word "Streben."

Richard Dehmel writes:-

1) "Wenn du auch irrst
auf den Bergen des Strebens:
Nichts ist vergebens,
denn du wirst.
Nur: bleibe Herr des Strebens."

Gerhardt Hauptman writes in his "Der arme Heinrich":

2) "Du rangst! Dein Ringen hab' ich wohl erkannt.
Die Ringenden sind die Lebendigen, und
die in der Irre rastlos streben, sind
auf guten Weg."

This same idea is found in other lyrics under the name of 'longing.' Notice the following from Rilke:

3) "Alle Angst ist nur ein Anbeginn;
Aber ohne Ende ist die Erde,
und das Bangen ist nur die Geberde,
und die Sehnsucht ist ihr Sinn---."

So it rings also in the sweet music of George:

1) Quoted in Lewisohn P.142 2) Lewisohn P.142
3) Lewisohn P. 140

1) "Nicht von der eisigen Firnen
drohendem Rätsel erschrick,
und zu den ernsten Gestirnen
heb' den suchenden Blick."

These modern lyric poets have, of course, a great power of imagination. They feel the beauty of this human world. They reach out for the stars. They have an inner urge. They strive with all their might for the solution of the riddle which life holds before them. And they write much that is worthy, much that is marvelously beautiful. But they have not found certainty and great joy. Therefore, the lyric becomes a passionate, fine expression of the troubled longing soul.

1) Lewisohn P. 140

III.

I shall endeavor to make these tones clear by quoting several characteristic poems from the two periods. Naturally only a small part of the numberless lyrics can be used. I must make a careful selection, and that is not an easy task, when all the conditions are realized. A recently edited anthology contains poems from one hundred and twenty seven poets. And these are only contemporary poets. Many of them, to be sure, are not very important and hardly worthy to be placed by the side of the great lyric poets from the earlier days.

Yet there are also important and extremely significant lyricists among the newer poets, to whom honor should be fittingly given. Poets like Hofmannsthal, Liliencron, Dehmel, Werfel, step forth pre-eminently. These poets and their kin not only write beautiful verses in the modern tone, but at times also they sound the music of the older faith and of genuine German love and joy. Yet in general they remain spirits of the new day.

I have, therefore, sought to select lyrics that show the modern tone at its highest. The attempt of this thesis is not to assert that all modern lyrics are

feelingless and hopeless; but rather that the general tendency is quite different from that of the older lyric. The latter is an inclination toward faith, the former toward questioning. I have thus sought to select lyrics which show these tendencies most clearly. I have also appended critical remarks in order to explain the reason for the individual selections or to show the significance of the poet.

The most of the lyrics thus selected may be classed as Spring Songs, Love Songs, or Reflective Songs; because in songs of this character the tones of joy and hope and faith would be clearly heard, if it were possible to find such tones anywhere.

A. Spring Songs

Frühlingslied - Ludwig Hölty

Die Luft ist blau, das Tal ist grün,
Die kleinen Maienglocken blühn,
Und Schlüsselblumen drunter.
Der Wiesengrund ist schon so bunt,
Und malt sich täglich bunter.

Drum komme, wem der Mai gefällt,
Und freue sich der schönen Welt,
Und Gottes Vatergüte,
Die diese Pracht hervorgebracht,
Der Baum und seine Blüte."

This is a graceful little lyric, filled with reverent admiration of the wonders of nature and with praise of the Creator. Much of the charm lies in its simplicity. It has but few words, yet carefully chosen. And in these few musical words one finds a picture of the joy of spring and is led to feel thereby the goodness of Him who makes such beauty possible.

Frühlingslied - Heinrich Heine

Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt
Liebliches Geläute.
Klinge, kleines Frühlinglied,
Kling hinaus ins Weite.

Kling hinaus bis an das Haus
Wo die Blumen spriessen.
Wenn du eine Rose schaust,
Sag, "Ich lass sie grüssen."

This is one of the daintiest of the verses of this fascinating poet. There is not a touch here of that

"sardonic smile;" none of the bitterness of his lonely genius. The lyric is sheer music; not a musically written prayer like Hölty's, but a song of rejoicing at the full blossoming of the spring time. There is no substantial content here, either of thought or picture. Yet the verses sing themselves into one's soul as a delicious, delirious joy in the awakening of the world to a new and fragrant life. The melody is produced by the repetition of the 'l' and 's' sounds.

Mailied - Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Wie herrlich leuchtet
Mir die Natur!
Wie glänzt die Sonne!
Wie lacht die Flur!

Es dringen Blüten
Aus jedem Zweig.
Und tausend Stimmen
Aus dem Gesträuch.

Und Freud' und Wonne
Aus jeder Brust.
O Erd'; O Sonne!
O Glück, O Lust!

O Lieb', o Liebe!
So golden schön,
Wie Morgenwolken
Auf jenen Höhn!

O Mädchen, Mädchen,
Wie lieb' ich dich!
Wie blickt dein Auge!
Wie liebst du mich!

So liebt die Lerche
Gesang und Luft,
Und Morgenblumen
Der Himmelsduft,

Wie ich dich liebe
Mit warmem Blut,
Die du mir Jugend
Und Freud' und Mut

Zu neuern Liedern
Und Tänzen gibst.
Sei ewig glücklich,
Wie du mich liebst!

This is a characteristic lyric of the greatest of Germany's lyric poets; written in his youth when joy was abounding and enthusiasm at fever heat. He was taking his

eager rides to Sesenheim to visit the beloved Friederika. The golden splendor of the fields and the rich fragrance of the May air were an integral part of the paradise in which he was then dwelling. Thus he poured forth his joy and love as the birds do, in full-throated ecstatic song.

Frühlingsglaube - Ludwig Uhland

Die linden Lüfte sind erwacht,
Sie säuseln und weben Tag und Nacht,
Sie schaffen an allen Enden -
O frischer Duft, o neuer Klang!
Nun, armes Herze, sei nicht bang!
Nun muss sich alles, alles wenden.

Die Welt wird schöner mit jedem Tag,
Man weiss nicht, was noch werden mag,
Das Blühen will nicht enden.
Es blüht das fernste, tiefste Tal:
Nun, armes Herz, vergiss der Qual!
Nun muss sich alles, alles wenden.

This is more meditative, more self-conscious, more thought-provoking. Here is no spontaneous welling forth of song at the very joy of the spring time, as were the others. Beauty is there, but it is a measured beauty.

Song is here, but it is a calm song. The poet is thinking of the meaning beneath the season's awakening; of the message that lies within these ever-increasing days of beauty. He expresses the faith that the miracle of Spring betokens also a new life and a larger life for the soul that has been in a troubled winter world.

Er ist's - Edouard Mörike

Frühling lässt sein blaues Band
Wieder flattern durch die Lüfte;
Süsse, wohlbekannte Düfte
Streifen ahnungsvoll das Land.

Veilchen träumen schon,
Wollen balde kommen.
--Horch, von fern ein leiser Harfenton!
Frühling, ja du bist's!
Dich hab' ich vernommen.

The whole song is tuned to the "Harfenton" and as such is a lyric of considerable merit. There is an appropriate choice in the word "ahnungsvoll;" and the figure of "dreaming violets" is very clever and graceful. Here, too, there is miracle which confirms hope and faith.

But when we turn from such songs to the lyrics of

the modern time, we hear continually a different tone. Spring brings beauty, to be sure, and music; but it is "the still sad music of humanity" and the cold grace of a marble statue. No warm living soul speaks out here its hope and joy. On the contrary a questioning human heart is dreaming in the quiet misty air; or stretching its arms blindly out in longing toward an unknown God.

Frühlingstag - Hermann Hesse

Wind in Gesträuch, und Vogelpfiff,
Und hoch im höchsten süssen Blau
Ein stilles stolzes Wolkenschiff-
Ich träume von einer blonden Frau,
Ich träume von meiner Jugendzeit.
Der hohe Himmel, blau und weit,
Ist meiner Sehnsucht Wiege.
Darin ich stillgesinnt
Und selig warm,
Mit leisem Summen liege,
Sowie in seiner Mutter Arm
Ein Kind.

This, too, is wonderful music. It is just as genuine and poetic as the preceding lyrics. But it speaks a different language. On this soft music of springtime dreaminess we step over into the modern lyric.

A still broader step is taken in the following poem by Richard Dehmel.

Maifeierlied - Richard Dehmel

Es war wohl einst am ersten Mai,
Viel Kinder tanzten in einer Reih,
Arme mit reichen,
Und hatten die gleichen
Vielen Stunden zur Freude frei.

Es ist auch heute erster Mai,
Viel Männer schreiten in einer Reih,
Dumpf schallt ihr Marschgestampf,
Heut hat man ohne Kampf
Keine Stunde zur Freude frei.

Doch kommt wohl einst ein erster Mai,
Da tritt alles Volk in eine Reih,
Mit einem Schlage
Hat's alle Tage
Ein paar Stunden zur Freude frei.

Dehmel was struggling in his literature on behalf of the individual enmeshed in the social mass. This particular lyric is one of his half-yearning, half-bitter pleadings for opportunity in the life of the awaking,

suffering toiler. He pictures simply but poignantly a Mayday of the golden past, one in the dull hopeless present, and yet another in the golden age to come. Almost hopeless in tone; fierce in its contrast between the fact and what should be; skillful in its creative touch that parallels the three stanzas in form and expressions; the song cites happy children in the far-away past, sullen men in the leaden present, and a whole people in the cheery day to come. Not always have the wrongs and longings of the proletariat been so restrainedly, yet sympathetically and beautifully set to music.

Millionen Nachtigallen schlagen - Theodor Däubler

Die Sterne. Blaue. Ferne.
Ein Flammensang der Sterne!
Millionen Nachtigallen schlagen.
Es blitzt der Lenz.
Myriaden Wimpern zucken glühend auf.
Das grüne Glück von Frühlingsnachtgelagen
Beginnt sein eigenbrünstiges Geglänz.
Die lauen Schauer nehmen ihren Zauberlauf;
Millionen Nachtigallen schlagen.
Erkenne ich ein freundliches Gespenst?
Ich werde mich im Ernst darum bewerben.

Der kleinste Wink will sich ins Wittern kerben:
Wer weiss, wann meine Träumlichkeit erglänzt?
Gespenster gleichen unsern sanften Tieren,
Sie könnten schnell den Samt der Neigung spüren.
Sie heben, schweben, weben sich heran,
Und halten uns unfassbar sacht im Bann.
Ich will die Lichtgewimmelstille nicht verlieren,
Ein altes Walten muss sich bald aus Sanftmut rühren.
Millionen Nachtigallen schlagen.
Die ganze Nacht ermahnen uns verwandte Stimmen.
Es scheint ein Mond geheimnisvoll zu glimmen
Doch ist zu warm die Nacht, voll atmenden Gehagen!
Myriaden brunstbewusste Funken suchen sich im Fluge,
Sie schwirren hin und her doch im Frühlingsfluge.
Das Lenzgespenst, das Lenzgespenst geht um in Hage!
Es kann der Laubwald wandern und sich selbst erwarten,
Das schwankt und walzt nach allen alten Wandelarten;
Es lacht die Nacht; der Wagen wagt, es wacht die Wage.
Es blitzen da Myriaden tanzvernarrte Fragen--
Millionen Nachtigallen schlagen.

Here we find no longer a simple song of spring beauty, nor yet a call of faith to the soul of man. This song discloses rather a search for new worlds in the midst of

the dark uncertainties of the present. The questioning of the new times is here represented very fittingly by the "Funken." Here are masses of resonant words with frequent alliteration and play on vowels; startling images; brilliant flashes of light and swiftly alternating shadows; a sonorous, heavy, puzzling song.

Yet the more we read it, the more we find the magic of it, the laughing lilt of its spring music, and its rich freight of the thoughtful meaning. It seems as if the poet were trying to picture the spring night's wealth of sound and light and shadow by light and shade and sound in words.

I offer one more Spring Song, a lyric of Arno Holz.

"In einem Garten, unter dunklen Bäumen,
erwarten wir
die Frühlingsnacht.
Noch
glänzt kein Stern.
Die Büsche schweigen.
Plötzlich
aus einem Fenster,
leise
Getragen, schwellend, die Töne einer Geige.

Der Goldregen blinkt,
der Flieder duftet,
In unsern Herzen - geht der Mond auf."

This poem is a good example of the free verse as well as of the hobby of Holz to have his poems appear in peculiar form on the printed page. Such printed from has no special value in poetry; for poetry speaks more to the ear than to the eye. But it is a part of the modern spirit which seems to rely much upon striking peculiarities.

As far as content is concerned the poem might just as well be old. There is nothing here peculiarly significant for any age. But this sketchiness and the bizarre are marks of an uncertainty which is modern.

B. Love Songs

Let us compare Goethe's famous "Gefunden" with Flaischlen's "So regnet es sich langsam ein" and Dehmel's "Aus banger Brust."

Gefunden - Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Ich ging im Walde
So für mich hin,
Und nichts zu finden,
Das war mein Sinn.

Im Schatten sah ich
Ein Blümchen stehn
Wie Sterne leuchtend,
Wie Äuglein schön.

Ich wollt' es brechen,
da sagt es fein:
"Soll ich zum Welken
Gebrochen sein?"

Ich grub's mit allen
Den Würzlein aus,
Zum Garten trug ich's
Am hübschen Haus.

Und pflanzt es wieder
Am stillen Ort;
Nun zweigt es immer
Und blüht so fort.

This poem is a symbolic representation of his union with his wife and was written for her in 1813, twenty-five years after their marriage. It is a delicate appreciation of the continuance of their love.

Aus banger Brust - Richard Dehmel

Die Rosen leuchten immer noch,
Die dünkeln Blätter zittern sacht;
Ich bin im Grase aufgewacht,
O kämst du doch,
Es ist so tiefe Mitternacht.

Der Mond verdeckt das Gartentor,
Sein Licht fliesst über in den See,
Die Weiden warten still empor,
Mein Nacken wühlt im feuchten Klee;
So liebt ich dich noch nie zuvor!

So hab' ich es noch nie gewusst,
So oft ich deinen Hals umschloss.
Und blind dein Innerstes genoss,
Warum du so aus banger Brust
Aufstöhntest, wenn ich überfloss?

O jetzt, o hättest du gesehen,
Wie dort das Glühwurmpärchen kroch!
Ich will nie wieder von dir gehn!
O kämst du doch!
Die Rosen leuchten immer noch.

Notice the words "Mitternacht," "aufstöhntest," "Glühwurmpärchen," "aus banger Brust," "kämst du," Here certainly is longing, lack of comfort, despair. The melody likewise is in a minor key.

So regnet es sich langsam ein - Flaischlen

So regnet es sich langsam ein und kürzer
wird der Tag und immer seltener der Sonnen-
schein.
Ich sah am Waldrand gestern ein paar
Rosen stehn .....
gib mir die Hand und komm..... wir
wollen sie uns pflücken gehn.....
Es werden wohl die letzten sein!

Here, too, the melody is minor and slow, the song coming from a heart that is filled with longing.

We find a similar contrast between Heine's "der Asra," on the one hand; "Seelen" by Paul Wertheimer and "Liebe" by Leo Greiner on the other. All three represent a love that may not be requited. Heine fills his lyric with romantic painting and makes the love heroic; the others sing their song in the gloom of passing shadows. Notice the fittingly chosen words in each case.

Der Asra - Heinrich Heine

Täglich ging die wunderschöne
Sultanstochter auf und nieder
Um die Abendzeit am Springbrunn,
Wo die weissen Wasser plätschern.

Täglich stand der junge Sklave
Um die Abendzeit am Springbrunn,
Wo die weissen Wasser plätschern;
Täglich ward er bleich und bleicher.

Eines Abends trat die Fürstin
Auf ihn zu mit raschen Worten:
"Deinen Namen will ich wissen,
Deine Heimat, deine Sippschaft!"

Und der Sklave sprach: "Ich heisse
Mohamet, ich bin aus Yemen,
Und mein Stamm sind jene Asra,
Welche sterben, wenn sie lieben."

Liebe - Leo Greiner

Wir sind zwei Schatten, die aus Welt und Welt
An einem Eschenbaum zusammentrafen.
Wir glitten einsam im entrückten Feld
Und suchten späte Herberg, um zu schlafen.
Und standen e i n e n tiefen Augenblick
Uralt bekannt uns gegenüber.
Und grüssten uns und wuchsen bis ans Glück.
Dann sanken wir hinüber und herüber,
Zerfallend in die alte Nacht zurück.

Seelen - Paul Wertheimer

Du weisst; wir bleiben einsam: Du und ich,
Wie Stämme, tief in Gold und Blau getaucht,
Mit freien Kronen, die der Seewind küsst.....
So nah, doch ganz gesondert, ewig zwei.
Doch zwischen beiden webt ein feines Licht
Und Silberduft, der in den Zweigen spielt,
Und dunkel rauscht die Sehnsucht her und hin.

I present two more songs that may be compared in similar fashion. One is a delightful picture of contentment at the close of day, written by Theodor Storm. The other lies "grabesschwer" upon the heart. It was written by Else Lasker-Schüler. In one we find the ancient courage of German heroes, and 'true love even to the grave.' The other cries itself into a restless sleep.

Schliesse mir die Augen beide
Mit den lieben Händen zu!
Geht doch alles, was ich leide,
Unter deiner Hand zur Ruh'.
Und wie leise sich der Schmerz
Well' um Welle schlafen leget,
Wie der letzte Schlag sich reget,
Füllest du mein ganzes Herz.

Theodor Storm

Weltende - Schüler

Es ist ein Weinen in der Welt,
Als ob der liebe Gott gestorben wär',
Und der bleierne Schatten, der niederfällt,
Lastet grabesschwer.

Komm, wir wollen uns näher verbergen....
Das Leben liegt in aller Herzen
Wie in Särgen.

Du! wir wollen uns tief küssen.....
Es pocht eine Sehnsucht an die Welt,
An der wir sterben müssen.

C. Reflective Songs

Let us compare the "Abendlied" by Hoffman von Fallersleben with the "Abendgang" by Wilhelm von Scholz.

Abendlied - Hoffman von Fallersleben

Abend wird es wieder:
Über Wald und Feld
Säuselt Frieden nieder,
Und es ruht die Welt.

Nur der Bach ergiesset
Sich am Felsen dort,
Und er braust und fliesset
Immer, immer fort.

Und kein Abend bringet
Frieden ihm und Ruh',
Keine Glocke klinget
Ihm ein Rastlied zu.

So in deinem Streben
Bist , mein Herz, auch du:
Gott nur kann dir geben
Wahre Abendruh'.

Abendgang - Wilhelm von Scholz

Das ist unser schweigender Abendgang.
Herbst. Blätter fallen wegentlang.
Nasse Äste tragen den Himmel, der bleich
Und dunstig niederhängt über den Teich.

Die Brücke. Trüber Laternenschein
Fällt schwankend in schmutzigen Schlamm hinein.
Vorüber. Dunkel wie Menschen stehn
Die Bäume und sehen uns weitergehn.

In the former the poet finds rest in spite of the madly confusing life. The latter poem is sketchy and indistinct. To this poet the evening is "schweigend, dunstig." The only light is a "trüber Laternenschein." The poet has found neither God nor rest.

Compare also the "Abendlied" by Gottfried Keller with a verse by Max Dauthendey.

Abendlied - Keller

Augen, meine lieben Fensterlein,
Gebt mir schon so lange holden Schein,
Lasset freundlich Bild um Bild herein:
Einmal werdet ihr verdunkelt sein.

Fallen einst die müden Lider zu,
Löscht ihr aus, dann hat die Seele Ruh';
Tastend streift sie ab die Wanderschuh',
Legt sich auch in ihre finstre Truh'.

Noch zwei Fünklein sieht sie glimmernd stehn
Wie zwei Sternlein, innerlich zu sehn,
Bis sie schwanken und dann auch vergehn,
Wie von eines Falters Flügelwehn.

Doch noch wandl' ich auf dem Abendfeld,
Nur dem sinkenden Gestirn gestellt;
Trinkt, o Augen, was die Wimper hält,
Von dem goldnen Überfluss der Welt!

Even blindness can find a golden overflow, in this poem that Storm called "dieses reinste Gold der Lyrik."

On the contrary a young man finds "die Luft so schwer."

Die Luft so schwer,
Wolken stehen weiss und still,
Der Himmel hohl und aschenleer,
Ein Rabenschrei --
Und kreischt vorbei.
Die Bäume stehen kalt umher,
Es ist, als ob das letzte Herz gestorben sei.

Max Dauthendey

Once more compare a poem by Joseph von Eichendorff with one by Walter Calé. I shall set these side by side without any further remarks.

Mondnacht - von Eichendorff

Es war, als hätt' der Himmel
Die Erde still geküsst,
Dass sie in Blütenschimmer
Von ihm nun träumen müsst'.

Die Luft ging durch die Felder,
Die Ähren wogten sacht,
Es rauschten leis die Wälder,
So sternklar war die Nacht.

Und meine Seele spannte
Weit ihre Flügel aus,
Flog durch die stillen Lande,
Als flöge sie nach Haus.

--

Wir tauchten aus dem Strom - Walter Calé

Wir tauchten aus dem Strom, der jenseit fliesst,
Und wo wir eines waren willenlos,
Und wandeln nun für eine kurze Weile
In argen Fesseln unter Raum und Stunden,
Wir gehen Wege, welche weit getrennt sind,

Und nur mit Blicken, welche trösten sollen,
Von fern uns winkend -- eine kurze Weile,
Bis dass wir wieder zu dem Strome tauchen,
Und wieder eines sind und willenlos.

Finally I shall place side by side two very characteristic poems from the two periods. One is Schiller's famous "Hoffnung." The other is called "Unterdessen" and was written by Gustav Schüler.

Hoffnung - Schiller

Es reden und träumen die Menschen viel
Von besseren künftigen Tagen
Nach einem glücklichen, goldenen Ziel
Sieht man sie rennen und jagen.
Die Welt wird alt und wird wieder jung,
Doch der Mensch hofft immer Verbesserung.

Die Hoffnung führt ihn ins Leben ein,
Sie umflattert den fröhlichen Knaben,
Den Jüngling begeistert ihr Zauberschein,
Sie wird mit dem Greis nicht begraben;
Denn beschliesst er im Grabe den müden Lauf,
Noch am Grabe pflanzt er -die Hoffnung auf.

Es ist kein leerer, schmeichelnder Wahn,
Erzeugt im Gerhirne des Toren.
Im Herzen kündigt es laut sich an:
Zu was Besserm sind wir geboren!
Und was die innere Stimme spricht,
Das täuscht die hoffende Seele nicht.

Unterdessen - Gustav Schüler

Schönheit is Atem. Aber Brot ist Brot.
Und Tausend hungern. Und die Mühlen mahlen.
Und Königstische wissen nichts von Not.
Und Tausend beten nachts zu ihren Qualen.

Und Mütter fiebern, wie kein Fieber schlägt,
Weil ihre Kinder schwer im Schlafe wimmern.
Die Mütter hören's, dass man Bretter trägt,
Um einen rohen Armensarg zu zimmern.

Und unterdessen lauscht die heilige Nacht,
Und unterdessen wird das Licht erkoren,
Und unterdessen hat die Schönheit acht
Auf jede Perle, die der Tau geboren.

In the foregoing reflective lyrics we may clearly hear the tones of certainty and joy in the older poets, and of questioning and despair in the modern verses. We hardly need to elaborate upon the statement; the poems

speak for themselves. They show distinctly the difference in spirit between the songs of a sunny day and the laments of dull, dark night.

D. Let me quote also five excellent specimens of the sketchiness and fragmentariness which is a strong tendency in the modern lyric poetry. These poems have some literary excellencies in music and word power; but are no clearer or more complete in meaning than they are in the courage or joy of their spirit.

Aus den "Liedern an eine Geliebte"
von Rudolph Alexander Schröder

Ich habe keine Schmerzen:
Aber die Sehnsucht verzehrt mich.
Ich habe keine Sehnsucht:
Aber mein Verlangen macht mich unruhig.
Ich habe kein Verlangen:
Aber meine Schmerzen quälen mich.

--

Vierzeiler - Kurt Bock

Leise, leise erklingt die Nacht-
von allen Zweigen
Sehnen erwacht:
Du, - ganz mein eigen -

Der Wandrer - Franz Werfel

Ich bin müde, so marschmüde,
Ich bin schwer, so schön schwer.
Nicht müde bin ich, nicht schwer,
Nur marschmüde and so schön schwer.
Ich weiss, das kommt daher:
Die Erde liebt mich.Reinen innerlich
Und reiszt mich fest und fest an sich.

--

Seele - Paul Zech

Du bist nicht das Grün in dem Grünen,
doch im Saft
die Kraft,
die über den sichtbaren Bühnen
von Ast zu Ast,
unsichtbare Himmel fasst.

--

Ein Gedicht von Ludwig Scharf

Ackerkrume,
Scholle der Erde,
heilige, reine.
Wie ich dich liebe!--
Erde war ich--
und Erde werd' ich

und nichts darüber!
Dann schlaf' ich wieder
in heiliger Scholle.

E. Before I close this exposition of the contrast in tone between the older lyric before 1870 and the lyric of the modern day, I should like to quote a few verses which reveal the magic that lies in words, as produced by the poets sometimes termed "the school of music." George, Rilke and Hofmannsthal write many verses without meaning, but verses that make music by the clever use of words. The following lines by Rilke will show this tendency of the modern lyric.

Ritter

Reitet der Ritter im schwarzen Stahl
hinaus in die rauschende Welt.
Und draussen ist alles: der Tag und das Tal,
und der Freund und der Feind und das Mahl im Saal.
und der Mai und die Maid und der Wald und der Gral,
und Gott ist selber vieltausendmal
an allen Strassen gestellt.
Doch in dem Panzer des Ritters drinnen,
hinter dem finstersten Ringen,
hockt der Tod und muss sinnen und sinnen.

Zeilen aus "Jeremia"

Täglich tönte ich von neuen Nöten
die du, Unersättlicher, ersannst,
und sie konnten mir den Mund nicht töten;
sieh du zu, wie du ihn stillen kannst,
wenn, die wir zerstossen and zerstören
erst verloren sind und fernverlaufen,
und vergangen sind in der Gefahr:
denn dann will ich in den Trümmerhaufen
endlich meine Stimme wiederhören,
die von Anfang an ein Heulen war.

IV. Conclusion

This thesis has endeavored to show that one can find two general tendencies in the New-High-German lyric. In the earlier time until 1870 the spirit of confidence and joy is in control. The symbol is the sun. The undertone is hope. The poet sees the world as a pretty, orderly garden in which men rejoice and where they thank God for beauty and for love.

Since 1870 the ruling spirit is one of question and of pessimism. The symbol is the moon and the undertone is longing. The poet sees the world as a battlefield whereon one must struggle with bitter problems and inhumanity and injustice. Poetry has accordingly taken very largely the form of sketch and fragment.

Yet there are not wanting signs that the poets of today in Germany are breaking a road to the new day. Wilhelm von Scholz writes the following inscription for a fountain:

"All eures Fragens Sinn ist heisser Durst.
Erwartet keine Antwort. Doch erwartet
vom Quell des Lebens einen kühlen Trunk.

Max Brod writes:

"Nur Liebe - von nichts andren weiss ich.
Zerreisset, was ich sonst gesungen!
Denn Lüge war's, wenn es nicht Liebe war. "

Erike Spann-Rheinsch writes:

"Wer ist zum Führer geboren?- 'Wer sicher den eigenen Weg geht.'
Wann ist mein eigen der Weg? - 'Wenn dich das Göttliche führt.'

And Heinrich Zerkaulen writes in the foreword to his poems: "Irrfahrten und Umwege und immer als leuchtendes Ziel. Macht euch das Leben kostbar! Winter und Sommer vergehen, was bleibt ist ein Klang. Vielleicht! Und dann meint es der Herrgott noch sehr gut -"

The following is one of his poems:

Die Nacht

An silbernen Ketten hängt die Welt,
Vom dunkelblauen Himmelszelt.
Wie eine Ampel, silberschwer,
So schwingt sie leise hin und her.

Und aller Menschen Lust und Leid
Steigt aus der Ampel, erdbefreit.--
Ein einziger Ton nur klingt hinaus
Als suche wer den Weg nach Haus.

Possibly such verses, which reveal the genuine old-German poetic spirit, are the prophetic rays of the coming sunrise for the German lyric. They are not, indeed, very remarkable poetry. Yet they do ring with a tone of hope. And we may be confident that the day will soon dawn, when the poets of Germany will by their 'striving' justify the famous saying of the talented Novalis:

"Wohin gehen wir? Immer nach Hause."

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I have studied most of the poems in the above-mentioned anthologies, besides many in other books and magazines. The books starred were read in full. Nearly all of (1) was read carefully, and in (2) everything relating to lyric poetry was read.

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